



THE NAUTILUS.

Vol. XLIII

OCTOBER, 1929.

No. 2

NOTES FROM THE PINCHOT SOUTH SEA EXPEDITION

BY H. A. PILSBRY

Our first stop in the Galapagos was at Tower Island. Imagine a nearly flat lava field, cracked and fissured, practically without soil, but thickly covered with brush growing out of the cracked lava. There is no fresh water, but the innumerable birds and black iguanas seem to thrive without it. Among the stones under bushes I found Pupillidae (*Gastrocopta*) in some abundance, but no larger snails.

Indefatigable Island, being high, is richer in snails. I soon found the Bulimulid group *Naesiotus*, even in the semi-arid shore zone. We tried to reach the summit from Seymour Bay, but on the second day had to give it up, as we came into a country where the brush was so thick that to go through it was out of the question. We had to bend it down and clamber over. Our canteens were nearly empty, and the humid zone still some miles ahead. We had better luck on Duncan Island, easily reaching the summit (about 2,000 ft. elevation) in a day's trip. We found several Bulimulids, a *Euconulus*-like species, a small flat Zonitid, *Succinea Helicina* and Papillidae. At about half way up I heard a wild yell from Dr. Mathewson, who was in the lead. A moment later the four of us were dancing around a huge black tortoise about 4 feet long. I have wanted to see the giant tortoises of the Galapagos in their native islands ever since I read Darwin's *Voyage of the Beagle*. I fell on his shell and embraced him. With a loud hiss he drew his head

and legs in and dropped to the ground. The pleasure of the meeting seemed to be all on our side. These tortoises, once so abundant, are now rare, and on part of the islands extinct. Our best record was three in one day.

Charles Island, though rocky near the coast, has very good soil and abundant verdure in the interior. We found five species of *Naesiotus*, many Succineas and various small snails. Part of the Bulimulidae could be collected by hundreds from weeds and shrubs. On Hood Island, which has a height of only about 600 ft., there were two fine *Naesiotus* in a bluff about a mile inland. We did not reach the higher ground, as we were anchored far from it, and travel through the thorny brush is slow.

Chatham Island has a settlement of about 600 persons, mainly Ecuadorian Indians. The Bulimulids are partly columnar forms. Six or seven species were found between the settlement and the shore at Wreck Bay—about five miles. Also Pupillidae and other small forms.

A three-toothed *Naesiotus* was abundant at Academy Bay, on the south coast of Indefatigable Island.

The marine collecting is generally not very good, though there are rich spots. Chitons of the *Radsia* group are common, but live under stones, not out in view as at Panama and Cocos Island. The largest Gastropod is *Fasciolaria princeps*. Dredging from the launch is rather exasperating work, as nearly every haul the dredge is hung up on a rock, but the returns are fairly good. There is a large *Tonna*, but I did not get it alive. The limpets are small and not common, but *Fissurella* is abundant.

We will probably visit a few more islands before sailing for the Marquesas, where I hope we will find more coral and a richer marine fauna.